

Number Fifteen, Saturday, July 12, contains a Letter to the People of England, Scotland, and Ireland.

Number Sixteen, Saturday, July 19, contains a Letter to Lord Viscount Sidmouth on his Circular to the Lords Lieutenant, dated on the 27th of March, 1817; and on divers other matter relating to the Situation and the Contrivances of the Boroughmongers.

A HISTORY  
OF  
THE LAST HUNDRED DAYS OF  
ENGLISH FREEDOM,

*Ending with the Passing of the Absolute-Power-of-Imprisonment Act, in the Month of March, 1817.*

ADDRESSED TO  
MR. JOHN GOLDSMITH, OF HAMBLETON, AND MR. RICHARD HINXMAN, OF CHILLING,

WHO WERE  
*The Chairman and Seconder at the Meeting of the People of Hampshire on Portsdown Hill, in the Month of February 1817, to Petition for a Redress of Grievances, and for a Reform in the Commons House of Parliament.*

LETTER I.

*North Hampstead, Long Island,  
June 10, 1817.*

MY WORTHY AND BELOVED FRIENDS,

A Revolution the most extraordinary has taken place in our country. The Revolution of 1688 was a nothing,

in point of importance, compared with that which we have now witnessed. Then the Royal Family and the line of descent of the Crown was changed, because a tyrant had grossly violated some of the fundamental laws of the land; but now, *all* the fundamental laws of the land stand *abrogated* by Acts of the Parliament. In England, in that same England, which was the cradle of real liberty and just laws, or, at least, which was the spot, where law and justice and freedom were preserved while despotism reigned over the rest of the world; in that England, which was so long held by the world to hold forth an example of all that was desirable in politics and in jurisprudence; in that England, whence the wise and brave men who first settled this now happy country brought all those principles of law and of government, which, by being adhered to, have been the cause of that happiness and virtue which are here every where apparent; in that same England what do we now behold? The very thought, though I am here beyond the reach of the evil, wrings my heart. We behold a system of taxation that has spread ruin, madness and starvation over the land; a band of Sinecurists, Pensioners, Bankers, and Funders who strip the land of all its fruits, except the portion which they share with the Standing Army who aid them in the work of seizing on those fruits; a people who have no voice in the choosing of those, who make laws af-

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fecting their property and their lives ; a House of Commons, the sale and barter of seats in which has, within its own walls, been acknowledged to be as notorious as the Sun at Noon Day ; and, finally, in answer to the nation's petitions for a redress of this enormous grievance, the cause of every calamity, we behold Acts passed by this same House of Commons, which have taken from the people all liberty of the press, all liberty of speech, and all the safety which the law gave to their very persons, it being now in the absolute power of Ministers to *punish any man whom they may please to punish*, in the severest possible manner short of instant death, not only without any trial by Jury, but without any trial at all ; without *hearing* him themselves in his defence ; without letting him know *the cause* of his punishment ; without telling him who are his *accusers* ; and without *any appeal*, now or hereafter, from their decisions ! They, or any one out of three of them, have the power to send for either of you at any hour ; to cause you to be conveyed away to *any jail* in the kingdom ; to be put into any dungeon or cell ; to be deprived of pen, ink and paper ; to be kept from all communication with wife, child, friend, or any body else ; to be locked up in a solitary cell ; to be kept in a damp or stinking hole ; and to be kept without *any limit as to time*, other than what their own sole will and pleasure may dictate.

Such is the present state of England, and, thanks to the virtue and valour of our brethren on this side of the Atlantic, I have the power to describe that state to the world, a power, which I certainly should not have had,

if the people of this country had not successfully resisted the attempts of our government in 1814 and 1815, when SIR JOSEPH YORKE said, in the House of Commons, that there was Mr. PRESIDENT MADISON yet to be put down ; and, when the TIMES newspaper told the then deceived people, that *regular governments never could be safe*, until the world was deprived of the "*dangerous example of successful democratic rebellion* ;" or, in other words, that the Boroughmongering System never could sleep in quiet, while there was *one free country left on the face of the earth*. The TIMES was right. The "*Holy Alliance*" is of no avail as long as this country remains what it now is. Hither, at last, all the oppressed, who harbour the just desire to resist, may come ; and, in the end, resistance would go from here, if it were to arise from no other quarter.

The Revolution, which has taken place in England is not seen in its true character without our taking some time to look at all its parts. We are too apt to speak of it merely as a *Suspension of the Act of Habeas Corpus* ; but, this is by no means doing the thing justice. That Act is, indeed, rendered nugatory ; but, that is merely *incidental*. That Act, which was passed so late as the reign of Charles II., merely provided some checks to false imprisonment, and more clearly defined the remedy ; but, in all times, since England has been England, the law of the land was, that *no man could be imprisoned, except by due course of law*, and due course of law included all the circumstances of informations, warrants by ordinary magistrates, previous examinations, confronting with accusers, commitments stating the pre-



cise crime, and a delivery or trial at the next Sessions or Assizes. This was the *due course of law* in England long before the Norman Conquest, and it always continued to be due course of law. The Act of Habeas Corpus only defined more precisely the *remedy* in case of violations, or neglect of observance of this due course of law.

Therefore, the Absolute-power-of-imprisonment Act does not call itself *an Act to Suspend the Act of Habeas Corpus*, which would have left the law as it stood before that Act was passed. Those who have made the Revolution knew what they intended too well to give their Act that title or that effect. They call it an Act to "empower *His Majesty* to imprison "any persons that *he* may suspect to "be guilty of treason, or treasonable "practices." We all know, that His Majesty has nothing to do with the matter; and, the provisions of the Act very explicitly state that this dreadful power is lodged in other hands.

It is clear, then, that (without going into the acts against the liberty of speech and of the press) by this one act, *all* the fundamental laws of the land are effectually put an end to, seeing that it places every one's *person* at the absolute disposal of the Ministers, and, if the very *body* of a man be not safe, what absurdity is it to talk about *property*! That man, who has no safety for his person cannot be said to *possess any thing*. We are told by the hirelings of the press, that it is only the "*disaffected*" that this Revolution need to make uneasy. That is to say, *only* those whom the Ministers and Boroughmongers may *dislike*. But, what more is asked for by

the Dey of Algiers, or by any Bourbon that ever existed? They do not want to kill or imprison *all* their people. That would not suit their purpose. They do not destroy even those whom they know to hate them, provided they be *still* and give them no annoyance. But, the moment any one, who possesses the means, discovers the inclination to oppose or thwart them, that moment they begin to *suspect* him, and then they proceed to *punish*. They want to do nothing more. This is all that arbitrary government has ever wanted to do; and this is what the Ministers in England are now *empowered to do by Act of Parliament*! That they will not exercise this power against the "*well-affected*;" that is to say, against their own partizans, is sure enough; nor will they exercise it against *sham* opponents like the Morning Chronicle, nor against *impotent* opponents like the Independent Whig. But, it is not less sure, that they will exercise it against every man, who possesses the *means*, and the *will* at the same time, of opposing their unjust, and exposing their foolish measures.

Why were there laws to *protect* men's persons and property? Why was there a trial *by Jury* for every alleged offence? The reason was, that no man should be in danger from the power of those who exercised the great functions of administering law and justice. These laws were not intended to *protect* those whom the government had no dislike to, but those whom it might dislike. These laws were not intended to protect those who *stood in need of no protection*, but those who *did stand in need of it*. These laws were intended to

prevent men in authority, or powerful men of any description, from hurting those whom they might regard as "*disaffected*" towards them; and, yet, forsooth, we are to think nothing of the abrogation of all these laws, because they put in jeopardy "*only the disaffected!*"

The Dey of Algiers proceeds against his "*disaffected*" by chopping off their heads, and our Ministers proceed against their "*disaffected*" by shutting them up in prison during their pleasure, in any jail in the kingdom, and deprived of light, warmth, and all communication with relations and friends, if they please. That is all the difference, and, of the two, the Dey's power is, *according to Blackstone*, the less hateful and dangerous. There is this further difference indeed: that the Dey's power extends to *every person in his dominions*, whereas the Boroughmongers, in giving the Ministers this dreadful power over the rest of the nation, not excepting the females of the Royal Family, have made an express clause to except their *precious selves!* At least, no Member of either House can be shut up without a notification to the House, and, of course, without a *hearing* of some sort or other.

You will want nothing to convince you, then, that a real and *total Revolution* has taken place in England; and, it is a duty which we owe to mankind, to our country, to ourselves and our children *to trace, if we possess the means, this great event to its true causes.* This is what I shall now do in the best manner that my abilities will enable me. I intend, after a short view of the previous period, to give a minute account of the transac-

tions of the *Last Hundred Days of English Freedom*, in which transactions I was so principal an actor, and of every thing belonging to which I was so well acquainted. And, I address myself to you, my friends, upon this occasion, because you are amongst the men, for whom I have the greatest personal regard, for whose public spirit and understandings I have the greatest respect, and because you were my associates in the proposing and carrying of that memorable *Petition*, which the honest people of our County approved of and signed upon Portsdown Hill, which *Petition* contains a fair and modest statement of the chief of the nation's grievances and desires, by which *Petition* I am sure you will stand to the last moment of your lives.

You, who live constantly in the country, and who are necessarily engaged in your own private affairs the far greater part of your time, had no knowledge of many things, which took place in London, during the interesting period of which I mean to treat, and the detail of which, as it is necessary to you, and, in some instances, will fill you with astonishment, is, of course, much more necessary to be communicated to the People of England at large.

But, before I proceed to the performance of this duty towards my country, it is necessary that I say something of what I am doing *in order to take care of myself and family*, which will not only be extremely interesting to you, but, I flatter myself, will be not uninteresting to many, many thousands of my countrymen, to many of whom (wholly unknown to me personally) I have to return my



unspeakable thanks for their attention and their offers of service, *solid substantial service*, to my wife, who was left behind me in circumstances so very trying. Indeed, the wife and children of a man, chiefly for the purpose of stifling whose writings (loyal and legal as every line of them was) a Revolution has been made in the government of a great nation, may reasonably be deemed objects of interest and of care with men, who know how to estimate talent and zeal, who love truth, justice, and fair-play, and who mourn over the disgrace of their country, exhibited in the at once mean and outrageous acts of its government in opposition to the talents of one single man, unassisted and unsupported by any thing on earth but the resources of his own mind, and those, too, unassisted by any trick, any craft, any finess, any disguise of any sort, or by the employment of any blandishments or flatteries towards any human being.

For the future, my kind and good friends, my mode of reasoning, my intentions, and my prospects, are these. I will be as frank with you and with the world as I would be with my own bosom.

It is impossible that England can remain *long in its present state*. That is altogether impossible. *More* must be done, or that which is done must be *undone*; and, if the latter take place, and I am alive, I shall return. If the former take place: if a *direct Censorship* of the Press be adopted, which it must be very soon, and if it become evident, that this sort of Bourbon government is to remain as long as force will uphold it, I shall, of course, not go to live under that go-

vernment, knowing very well that the warrants of Lords Sidmouth and Castlereagh are much more to be dreaded even than the thunderbolts that struck the ship, in which I sailed beyond the reach of those warrants.

In the *meanwhile*, that is to say, while I wait to see the events which will arise out of the Bourbon Measures and out of the workings of our good old friend, the National Debt, I must *eat and drink*, say you. Very true, and, though a little serves me and all belonging to me, I have not the least doubt that we shall be able to get a plenty of both from *the earth*, which is never niggardly towards those, who will apply to her with earnestness and with care. To the earth, therefore, the *untaxed* earth, I will apply. It would be affectation to pretend, that I have not the means of *living* here by my *pen*; but it is my intention to be a downright farmer, and to *depend* solely upon what I can get in that way. I begin by *counting* upon nothing but what I can raise from the ground. If any thing else does come my children will be so much the richer, though they may not, perhaps, be so much the happier. I shall, I trust, set an example to my children, that, though suddenly bereft of fortune, no one need despair, who has freedom, industry and health.

Whatever I send to be published in England I shall publish here in some shape or another, and, as you will see, though I have been so ill-treated by those who govern England, I shall never turn my back upon my country or my countrymen. There are persons here, who will think well of no Englishman, who will not only distinctly and explicitly disclaim all

allegiance to the king, but all regard for his country. I will do neither. I owe allegiance to the king as much as any American owes allegiance to the laws of his country. I cannot, if I would, *according to the laws of England*, get rid of it. And, as to my country and my countrymen, my attachment to them can never be equalled by my attachment to any other country or people. I owe a temporary allegiance to this country, and am bound to obey its excellent laws and government. I am even bound to assist in repelling my own countrymen, and to consider them as enemies, if they attack this country. All this I owe in return for the protection I receive. I owe, besides, great gratitude to this sensible and brave people and to their wise, gentle, and just government for having preserved from the fangs of despotism this one spot of the globe. I owe to them my freedom at this moment. I owe to them that I am not shut up in a dungeon instead of being seated in safety and writing to you. These are great claims upon my gratitude, and my feelings towards the Government and the People are fully commensurate with those claims; but, as to the changing of allegiance, or the denying of my country, it is what I shall never do. England, though now bowed down by Boroughmongers, is my country; her people are public-spirited, warm-hearted, sincere and brave; common dangers, exertions in common, long intercourse of sentiment, and the thousands upon thousands of marks of friendship that I have received, all these have endeared the people of my own country to me in a peculiar manner. I will die an

Englishman in exile, or an Englishman in England free.

I was well aware of this violent hostility, in some persons, to the very name of England, before I left my country; and, I resolved, accordingly, not to place myself in the way of disappointing any one who might expect me to become her assailant. It was this reason which induced me to leave the City of New York in twenty four hours after landing in it. I came over to this island the next day after my landing, and here, I dare say, I shall remain as long as the National Debt and the Bourbon System will exist, unless I make a tour into New England, where I never have been, and which country I have a great desire to see.

Here, then, we are with mutton not so fine as that of Hambledon, and lamb less early and fine than that of Chilling; but, we have many good things which you have not; and, what is better than all the good things put together, we have not only no Secretary of State's Warrants, but *of all the good things every man, woman and child has an abundance*. The salt, the very salt, which our neighbour CHIDDEL sells you for 20 English Shillings a bushel, is *brought here and sold to us for 3 English Shillings a bushel*. But, then, we here have not the honour to see any such man as our neighbour GARNIER, whose grand-father was an honest Coachman to George the First, and who, for a long life, has had a sinecure of *twelve thousand pounds sterling a year*, paid him out of those taxes, which make neighbour CHIDDEL's salt so dear in England, and which tax being taken off when the salt is exported, makes



us buy it so cheap\*. Is there *never* to be an end to these things? Are they to be endured *for ever*? Mrs. HINXMAN might here lend her poney to a friend for a week without her husband being *surcharged* and made, on that account, to pay the horse tax for a year. Here your wives might, as good farmers' wives did in England in former times, and as they do here now, turn *their fat into candles*, and their *ashes and grease into soap*, without your being either *fined* or *imprisoned* for the deed. Here poor CHALCROFT of Cager's Green would have no need to pull down, in consequence of an *Exciseman's threat*, the hop-poles that the hops were climbing up out of his garden hedge. Here you might, without any risk of loss of estate or of ears, turn your own Barley into Malt and your Honey into Metheglin. Here you might travel from Jericho to Jerusalem, and from Jerusalem to Babylon (for all these places are in this Island) and never meet, not only not a *beggar*, but scarcely a person *walking on foot*, as almost every body *rides* in some way or other. And here my son William's pretty little miniature mare, which has taught my children to ride, would not have cost me *one hundred pounds sterling in tax*, as she has done in England, when the original cost of herself was only *four pounds*, saddle and all.

But, though I say, and I mean, to place my sole *dependance*, for a *living*, upon the fidelity of the *earth*, I beg you not to suppose, that I mean to

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\* In my Letter to Lord Sidmouth, I stated the price at 4s. 6d. a bushel; but I now find, that we give only 3s. sterling.

cease, for one moment, in my efforts to aid in the restoration of the freedom of my country. *That* shall be the constant object of my life. *That* nothing shall prevent me from pursuing, and by all the means, of all sorts, that my mind can invent, or that it can avail itself of. If the Bourbon system be rendered so complete as to make it impossible for any one to publish my writings *in England*, you may depend on their being always *published here*. They will find their way to England some how or other; and, though the circulation will not be so wide, it will be *something*. And, all this while, how will the Borough-mongers stand? They have stripped me of a large fortune; but, for how long can they do it? As long as they can uphold the Bourbon system, and not one moment longer.

The sons and daughters of Corruption harp a good deal upon the circumstance of my having taken away a few hundred pounds in ready money, when I had said, in my notification from Liverpool, that I carried away nothing but my wife and my children. What! did they imagine that I counted it *any thing* to carry with me money enough to pay my passage and to furnish me with food and lodging for a few months? Did they imagine it to be *any thing* to have the means of putting myself on shore, when I left behind me a farm covered with stock of all sorts; a house full of furniture; an estate which, with its improvements, had cost me forty thousand pounds and which was mortgaged for less than seventeen thousand; copy-rights which were worth an immense sum, and a current income from my writings of more than ten thousand pounds; un-

der these circumstances was it too much to have a few hundred pounds in my own pocket, and to leave sufficient at the command of my wife for the purpose of bringing her and her children over to me? Did the sons and the daughters of corruption grudge us this? Did they really expect that, in abandoning a fortune larger than has ever been possessed by Lord Sidmouth or any of his family; did they imagine that in making this enormous sacrifice, or, rather, in being driven from these the fair fruits of my industry and talents, I was going, not only to lead the life of a mendicant, but, which was of much greater importance, to deprive myself of the means of having a place where I might have room and warmth to carry on the struggle against the Boroughmongers? If they did imagine this, they were as ignorant as they are well known to be greedy and merciless.

However, if the Boroughmongers adopt measures which shall wholly and entirely prevent the circulation of my writings, I shall still possess the means of living happily and easily, and the Boroughmongers will live as happily as they can under their new system. While I was enjoying a comparatively trifling income in England from my writings; and had lost, during the last three or four years, large sums annually by my agricultural pursuits and by my purchases of land, in common with others who were situated in that respect like myself; that is to say, who had been severely robbed, and thousands of them wholly ruined and brought to a jail, by the arbitrary change in the currency and by the other operations of the Banking and Funding system; as long as I remain-

ed in this state, Corruption took little notice of me. She knew very well, that the tax-gatherer would take care to keep me in a situation sufficiently humble as to pecuniary matters. But, when she saw that the resources of my mind had not only enabled me to set all the country to reading, and that, too, at so cheap a rate as to drive from the field all the tribes of "Religious Tracts" and "Moral Tracts" and "Amusing Tracts" and "Tracts for the Poor" and the "Lancastrian Tracts" and the "National Tracts;" when Corruption saw that my little publication had not only swept all these from the field, and had made the people, in the space of three short months ashamed of their own folly in having been amused by the puerile effusions of Fanatics and the crafty baits of Hypocrites; when she saw that my talents had not only produced this wonderful effect in so short a space of time, but had also opened to me a mine of wealth, in spite of the lowness of my prices and liberality of my allowances to dealers which partook of that carelessness about money which has characterized all the transactions of my life; when Corruption saw that I must be rich in spite of myself, and that my fame and my riches were going on increasing together, *then* it was that she, aided by her infernal associate, ENVY, set herself to work! For some time Corruption knew not what to do. She tried various underhanded means, in all of which she had the cordial co-operation of Envy. At last, driven to extremities by my perseverance in a strictly legal and loyal course, she resolved on open violence; which, however, she could not commit upon me without committing it, at the same



time, upon the laws of the country. In the commission of these acts of violence, BALEFUL ENVY was her constant associate! And even at this moment the country owes all the Acts that have been committed against it, as much, and even *more*, to Envy than it does to Corruption herself. Had it not been for the base, the detestable feelings of Envy which prevailed at the opening of the present Session of Parliament, those Acts which have been passed, never would have been passed. Of this matter I shall speak more in detail another time; but I repeat here, that the cause of Reform, has suffered more from this detestable feeling of Envy than it has suffered from all other enemies put together. When I say that it has suffered, I mean *for the present*; for, as to the future, neither Corruption nor Envy can prevent its success. All that was contained in the Register was, with Envy, "very good" indeed; very true, very powerful; "but *Cobbett*; the people talked of "no-body but *Cobbett*! *why* should "*Cobbett* know more than any body "else? why should *he* have all the "praise?" The truth is, that I did not want it; that I never sought for it; that no man living was ever so ready to give praise to others, labouring in the same cause, as I have been; that no man living ever took such pains to draw public applause down upon the heads of others as I have; and, what is still more, that no other man living ever stood silent and heard so many others applauded to the skies, admired beyond all bounds of expression, for the very plumage IN WHICH HE HIMSELF HAD DECORATED THEM. How often, Good God! have I, after having put

words into men's mouths; after having made wisdom come forth out of the mouths of babes and of sucklings; how often have I quoted these very words of my own as being their words, and took merit to myself for having had the diligence to select and republish their wise sayings! How often have I acted thus! How scrupulous have I been in observing the most impenetrable silence upon these matters, and, at last, to see Envy exerting all her malignant influence; keeping, at one time, a glum silence, and, at another time, endeavouring to marr by her doubts and hesitations the cause of the people; merely because the spontaneous and universal sentiment of the nation had placed me at the head of that cause! To see this at last after all my ten or twelve years of disregard of fame; after all the millions of proofs that I had given of having no envy in my own disposition, was a little too much for me patiently to endure. It was very natural for men to wish themselves in my place. It was natural for them to wish that all the people in the kingdom should be reading and repeating their words; but it was not natural for them to say, or to act as if they had said: "perish "the cause of the people, rather than "let it succeed without our being considered as the prime instrument of "its success." This was as unnatural, as unmanly, as base, and every way as wicked, as any of those Acts of which we have ever complained. But, Envy will not succeed in the end. Nay, she has not succeeded even thus far; for, the very measures, of which she has secretly approved, in the producing of which she has so mainly assisted, and in the adoption of which

she has, within herself exulted, because they tended to check, and, as she hoped, to destroy the progress of that influence, the sight of which her eyes could not endure; those very measures have only the more loudly proclaimed my fame to the world, seeing that there is not one single individual in England, who does not well know, that all the new laws; that all the provisions in those laws; that all the Reports, all the Imprisonments, all the hatched Plots, all the Schemes and all the Contrivances have been principally levelled at my writings. This is so well known, that every man in England would be deemed an idiot who affected to doubt it. Therefore, Envy, as far as things have gone, has only laboured to defeat her own purposes; and her Ladyship may be well assured, that *the part, which she has now to act*, is a more difficult one than any she has ever acted before. To give her *open approbation* of what is going on at this time, she *dares not*. She cannot very well be silent while it is going on. Yet, if it goes on, it will be seen how *impotent* she is; and if it ceases, she has me and my writings back again to mortify her more than ever. \* \* \* And now let us proceed to our History of the Last Hundred Days of English Freedom.

*The cause of Reform* was the subject of discussion. Disguise the matter how they will; talk as long as they please about *plots* and *Spenceans*, it was Reform that approached the Boroughmongers in such a formidable shape, and, against this it was that they armed themselves. This was no *new* cause: very far from it. The principle, that *no man shall be taxed without his own consent* is as old as

England is, or at least, as the very oldest of the laws of England. This was, in fact, the cause of HAMPDEN, the cause of SIDNEY; it was the cause at the Revolution in 1688, and it was the cause at the Revolution in 1817.

The American revolutionary war had the same basis. The Boroughmongers would insist upon *taxing the Americans without suffering them to send Members to Parliament*. These latter resisted, and their gallant and legal resistance was crowned with success. That war had brought on the nation such a burden of taxes, that the people looked to a *real representation* as their only safe-guard for the future. The subject of Reform was agitated. Mr. Pitt, the Duke of Richmond, and hundreds of others, then stood forward in the cause of Reform. The latter, as you well know, brought a Bill into the House of Lords to effect this grand purpose. Mr. Pitt declared, that "*no honest man* could be minister without a Reform in the Commons' House." Mr. Wilberforce too was a Reformer. Pitt's alliance with Dundas made him forget all his notions about Reform. But, so late as the year 1793, Mr. GREY, Mr. SHERIDAN, the late and present Dukes of Bedford, and many others, signed a Petition which was presented to the House of Commons, in which they state, that they are *ready to prove at the Bar*, that the people had no voice in choosing a majority of that House.

The French Revolution had now begun, and, as a *real representative government* had been established there, it was easy to see, that it would be quite impossible to keep the people of England quiet without a Reform, if the limited kingly government and a

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freely chosen assembly were suffered to exist in France. *Therefore*, and for no other cause, it was resolved to go to war with the new government of France, having first stimulated other powers to begin that war. The war succeeded in restoring the Bourbons, and in destroying freedom wherever she had raised her head on the Continent. But, in performing this work, the Boroughmongers contracted such a load of Debt, that, at the close of the war, they found the nation completely ruined. They expected fine sun-shine days for the rest of their lives; but, behold! they were worse off than before they began their war! They thought, that they had stifled the spirit of Reform for ever, but, they found, that all the evils of the country were *speedily traced to the old source*. Men asked each other what was the cause of this unexampled misery after so glorious a war. The *Taxes* was the answer. And why not *lessen the Taxes?* They are wanted for the Debt, the Standing Army, and the Staff and the Sinecure People and Pensioners. And *why* do all these exist in so enormous a degree? Because the House of Commons will not lessen the four latter, and because they have voted the Debt and used the money. And why have they done this? Because they have, for the far greater part, an interest in so doing. *Why* not choose other Members then? Because it is not the People who pay the Taxes, who have the choosing. *Why* have they not then?

Thus was the matter brought home, and Reform again began to be rung in the ears of the Honourable House, who, as it were to convince the people of the absolute necessity of that Re-

form, had, by a monstrous majority voted, only a few years before, that they would not *hear* evidence against Perceval and Castlereagh charging them with the actual sale of a seat in the House.

This was the position of things in the spring and summer of last year. Yet, it was *my own opinion*, that it was not prudent to urge on the question of Reform *at that time*. In the winter of last year, and about the month of February, I stated this my opinion very clearly to Major Cartwright, who had been for some time reproaching me with a *backwardness* in that cause. He, in a good-natured way, reproved me for wasting my great talents, as he was pleased to call them, on questions of *political economy*, in exposing the state of the finances, and in discussions about the Funding System, concluding with saying: "Let *them* settle their accounts as they will: let *us* have our rights." "Yes," replied I, but, my opinion is, that, "until they have *settled* their accounts, we never shall have our rights; or, at least, until all the world sees clearly *that they never can pay in full the interest of the Debt.*" This was my opinion for many years, and, therefore, I bent the greatest part of my force to this object: the making the subject of the Debt, in all its parts and bearings, familiar to the people. And, the knowledge, which is now possessed in England is quite surprising.

It was impossible to believe, that men, who *possessed the seats*, that is to say, who possessed all the real powers of the government; who had, *in fact*, the appointment of the Ministers, the filling of all places of profit and of

trust; the giving of all the commissions in the army and navy; the bestowing of all honours at the bar; the bestowing of the livings in what is called the gift of the Crown; and who, in short, possessed every thing in the country, having the power of taxing the people wholly in their hands: it was impossible to believe, that men so vested with power, and having a great standing army at their nod, would ever give up this mass of power and this mass of possessions, merely at the solicitation of an unarmed people. It was like petitioning an able man to give up his talents to you, or a handsome woman to give you up her beauty.

But, if some event were to happen, which would *shake the Boroughmongers by their own means*; some event which would make them stagger under their own weight; some event which would bring them to a stand, not knowing which way to turn themselves; then, indeed, they must give way, and do the people justice. I could suppose many events, that would have operated thus; but the event, which I was sure would be effectual, and which I was also sure would, sooner or later, take place, was the blowing up, or, at least, the total discredit of the Funding System by a *failure in the means of paying the interest of the Debt in full*.

It was, therefore, my opinion, that it was not prudent to urge on the cause of Reform to what might be called a *pitched battle* with its enemies, until those enemies were at war amongst themselves; that is to say, until the Boroughmongers found themselves compelled to break with the Fundholders. Whenever that should happen, I saw, that the Borough-

mongers would not only lose their best allies, but that those allies would be amongst the bitterest of their enemies; and that then, a Reform must take place, and in all human probability, in a peaceable and orderly manner.

To this opinion I held during the last summer, and now I draw near to that series of transactions, which have finally produced the Bourbon System in England. But this letter is already too long; I shall, therefore, not enter on these topics 'till my next; and, in the meanwhile, I remain your sincere friend,

WM. COBBETT.

P. S. I have this moment had pointed out to me by one of my sons a paragraph in the INDEPENDENT WHIG of the 30th of March, which I will notice here, merely because it contains a calumnious imputation, which, may deceive some persons, who have not been attentive observers of my conduct. The main object of the paragraph, is, to make the people of England, or that very small portion of them who read the Independent Whig, believe, that I had *long planned* my departure for America, and that I had long been writing in praise of every thing American, *in order to pave the way for this step*. The income from my Register was never *less than fifteen hundred pounds a year I believe*. Not a thing to be cast off upon a speculation of better fare, with a sea voyage for a whole family as a prelude. But, let us hear this *wise and patriotic WHIG*, well worthy to belong to the faction, whose name he has chosen to take.—“Our readers will perceive, in another department of our Paper, a letter from “ ‘Mr. COBBETT to the PUBLIC’ dated



"Liverpool, March 26, the contents  
 "of which, we are inclined to think,  
 "cannot excite much surprise, in those  
 "who have been accustomed to read  
 "the writings of that gentleman. It  
 "is to be recollected that Mr. Cobbett  
 "commenced his literary life in Ame-  
 "rica. Without entering at present,  
 "into any review of him as a public  
 "character, we feel, that to prove that  
 "he *has long contemplated this act*,  
 "we need only refer those who have  
 "been accustomed to read his lucubra-  
 "tions, *to re-peruse his numerous let-  
 "ters, not long since published, to the  
 "American People—to the unqua-  
 "lified praise of every thing American  
 "contained in those letters, and to the  
 "particular manner in which he had  
 "expressed himself, previous to the  
 "dreadful and arbitrary measures  
 "which the Ministers have resorted  
 "to, and which the Parliament had so  
 "fatally sanctioned, when predicting,  
 "as he did, with confidence, the suc-  
 "cess of the cause of Reform, and  
 "scouting, as he did, the idea of  
 "the enactment of the Gagging Bills,  
 "&c. It was clear to us, (and  
 "we have for months past stated that  
 "such was our opinion) that Mr.  
 "Cobbett was *satisfied in his own  
 "mind, that tyranny, and not liberty,  
 "would prove the result of his truly  
 "injudicious zeal*. Let the Reader  
 "refer back to his late Publications,  
 "and he will find that Mr. Cobbett,  
 "when scoffing at the Courier for  
 "holding out the threat of coercive  
 "laws, as constantly as he adverted  
 "to that subject, invariably opposed  
 "the menace of the Courier, with  
 "the prediction of the loss of one  
 "half of the population of the country,  
 "either in being killed in the oppo-*

"sing the enactment of such laws, or  
 "*in emigrating to America, to elude  
 "their vengeance*. It was clear to us,  
 "when we observed this kind of writ-  
 "ing adopted by Mr. Cobbett, that  
 "he *had made his own mind up to a  
 "voyage to America*, and that all his  
 "political writings had for their object  
 "*the promotion of his views in that  
 "country*. We were additionally led  
 "to indulge this belief from the in-  
 "formation we possessed that one of  
 "Mr. Cobbett's sons had been for  
 "some time past, actually settled in  
 "America, as a Bookseller, and pub-  
 "lishing his *Register, printed here,  
 "in that country*. Our opinion of  
 "Mr. Cobbett and his writings are  
 "upon record — we broached that  
 "opinion not only when he was here  
 "to defend himself, but when he was  
 "in the enjoyment of the climax of  
 "his popularity. We then stated that  
 "we considered he had *greatly in-  
 "jured the cause of Freedom and  
 "Reform*—such being our sentiments,  
 "we placed them with our reasons  
 "upon record, as became us as Jour-  
 "nalists, fearful of nothing so much  
 "as an abandonment of our public  
 "duty in *any pitiful compromise of  
 "our independence*. The solemn ques-  
 "tion that now remains for us to dis-  
 "cuss, as it regards the political cha-  
 "racter of Mr. Cobbett, is, whether  
 "after having taken so active and  
 "conspicuous a part in the cause of  
 "Reform, and having taken so much  
 "pains to *make proselites, to his own  
 "constantly wavering opinions*, the  
 "quitting his country and *turning his  
 "back upon the thousands whom he  
 "had succeeded in making converts to  
 "his opinions*, is the act of a Patriot?  
 "Previous to our entering upon this

“enquiry we will wait the publication  
 “promised by Mr. Cobbett, which is  
 “to explain his own motives, and  
 “after we have had the opportunity  
 “of perusing it, we will, with the  
 “strictest liberality and impartiality,  
 “place upon record our undisguised  
 “and genuine sentiments.—We have  
 “as decided a hatred to tyranny as  
 “Mr. Cobbett, or any other man in  
 “existence can have.—We would  
 “rather perish the *first* of Freemen  
 “than live the *last* of Slaves, but the  
 “love we have been taught to cherish  
 “for our country has instructed us to  
 “consider it our first and most imperi-  
 “ous duty to exert, at all risk, the  
 “best energies of our minds in the  
 “defence and support of the common  
 “freedom of our countrymen.—The  
 “hour of danger is the time for the  
 “*brave man to be at his post*.—When  
 “the country most *wants the service*  
 “of a patriot, that, of all others, is  
 “the moment to try his zeal and prove  
 “his fidelity.—Were *every public*  
 “*spirited writer* to follow the exam-  
 “ple of Mr. Cobbett, and fly to the  
 “shores of America, because such  
 “men, such drivellers of Statesmen  
 “as Castlereagh and his aspiring  
 “crew, have succeeded in the Suspen-  
 “sion of the Habeas Corpus and the  
 “enactment of Gagging Bills, &c.—  
 “to what a *state of degradation would*  
 “*the character of Englishmen be re-*  
 “*duced*.”

POPE says, that “a little knowledge  
 “is a *dangerous thing*.” SWIFT says,  
 that, if a man of real talent comes  
 forth and commands general attention,  
 “straight a *swarm of Dunces* rise up,  
 “and endeavour to sting him to  
 “death.” SOLOMON says, that there  
 is *nothing new under the Sun*. All

which sayings, the Independent Whig  
 has done his best to verify.

Now, as to the “*long contem-*  
 “*plated act*,” Mr. HINXMAN knows,  
 that I *last year* sowed about a million  
 of *ash seeds*, and that, this last win-  
 ter, I caused to be collected many  
 bushels more to sow *next year*, as  
 they lie one year in sand previously to  
 being sown. And this I was doing  
 while I was writing those Letters to  
 the Americans, which excited the sus-  
 picions of the sagacious Mr. WHITE  
 of the Independent Whig. And, as  
 for that “SON” of mine, whom this  
 sharp-sighted gentleman had disco-  
 vered to be settled in America and *re-*  
*publishing my Registers there*, if he  
 had been sober for any portion of the  
 last twelve months, he must have  
 known that *son* to be a *nephew*, that  
 he was sent out to publish *what I dared*  
*not publish in England*, and that all  
 the plan and the departure of my ne-  
 phew and the whole thing was publicly  
 stated in the Register in England in  
 February 1816. He may know fur-  
 ther, if he will, that, in *January last*,  
 I sent for this nephew and his partner  
 (whom I used to call my *Embassa-*  
*dors*) to *come home to England*, and  
 that one of them was *upon the point*  
*of sailing when I myself arrived at*  
*New York!* So much for the “*long*  
 “*contemplated act*.” But, how this  
 poor envious man must have blushed,  
 if blushing had not long forsaken him,  
 when he saw, in the next week’s ad-  
 dress, that I explicitly state my reso-  
 lution *never to become a Citizen of*  
*America!* He would then, I should  
 hope, blush too for saying that I had  
 “*turned my back upon my thousands*  
 “*of converts*.” You, my worthy  
 friends, and my countrymen in gene-

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ral, will have seen by this time, whether I have *turned my back* upon England, or upon Englishmen.

But *he* (brave man!) will remain at *his post*! And there he may remain as quietly as one of his staring posting-bills, and without attracting any more attention from the Ministers than those bills do from the Public. *He*, indeed! What danger is *he* in? His *very abuse of me is a sufficient security to him*, and that he knows very well. He need not, however, resort to such means: his intrinsic impotence is quite enough to protect him against the warrants of Secretaries of State. It is the *mastiff* and not the *mouse* that those gentry wish to muzzle. He will (generous creature)! be always at the *service* of his country! But, *what service*? I have caused to be published, since my departure, more of that one Address (to manl which he was preparing his fangs) *in one single day's sale*, than he publishes of his paper *in a whole year*! And, in all probability, there has been more sold of that address before now, than he will publish of his paper in *three years*. So that, supposing my matter to be equal to his in *quality*, and, surely one may suppose that without any very great degree of presumption, I have only to write and send over *one Register in three years* to equal this devoted patriot in point of magnitude of service to my country. He asks to what a state of degradation the character of Englishmen would be reduced, if *every public-spirited writer* were to *follow my example*. If every such writer (and there are many such) could do it, he *would* do it. For, what is it to my readers, whether I am at Botley, or in London, or on

Long Island; unless, indeed, we could suppose, that, while they applauded the writings, they liked to know that the writer's personal liberty, and perhaps his life, were in continual danger? And, if what I write *here cannot be published* in England, of what service to my country would it be for me to have remained in it?

The truth is, that, of all the envious men in the world, this man is the most shameless in the exposing of his envy. When he talks of the *effects* of his having abused me sometime back, he speaks *feelingly*; for it cost him one half of his readers. Yet, I never rejoiced at this. On the contrary, when people from the country have spoken to me about dropping his paper, I have always said: "Oh! no! Though he says spiteful things of me, he now-and-then publishes good things. Don't drop his paper. He is an ill-conditioned, envious man, but, I dare say, his paper will do *you* no harm, and I am sure it will do *me* none." I have used almost these very words to twenty different persons. I knew very well that his paper was sold to the Whig faction; but I thought his senseless rant against us would do us good rather than harm.

Mr. BELL, in his Weekly Messenger, had the candour and wisdom to observe, on the same 30th of March, that my taking up my *Citizenship* in America would be *allayed* by the payment of 5,000 dollars, the amount of a fine imposed on me for a libel in this country. Poor Mr. BELL was deceived. His envious malice blinded him. I have no *Citizenship* to take up, Mr. BELL, and no fine to pay and never

had. I paid 5,000 dollars for an *American* having, in my paper, condemned the late Dr. RUSHE's practice of Physic, which practice, as far as I recollect any thing about it, consisted in bleeding people to death to save their lives. But, I can excuse you, Mr. BELL. A man does not like to be left without readers, and particularly without *payers* for reading. Your falling off has been too shocking for any man to endure with patience. But, come, do not despair. A little veering about, if it does not recover your readers, may bring you your old grist from the Treasury: only, pray bear in mind, that an honest Parliament may call you to account and make you *refund*. WALTER and STEWART will have a long account of this sort to settle; and, though Stewart affects to treat *seriously* the charge of the Stamp Office against my son, he must end his career pretty quickly, or, I verily believe, that that very son is likely to be one of those who will make a *real charge* against him for what *he* may be found indebted to the people of England. Indeed, these hirelings smell danger at a great distance. Their efforts in support of Corruption are *now*, in their motive, like those which passengers on board a ship make to keep her from sinking. They are all now embarked in the same bottom with the Boroughmongers, and they must sink or swim with them. However, it will be prudent in them to begin to *prepare*

*their accounts*, which are of very long standing, and which *must* be settled. I would hunt the money in their hands to the last penny. I have seen a letter in WALTER's father's own hand, in which he states, that the Treasury paid him *seven hundred pounds* for his fine and expences, *on account of a libel on the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York!* This was a pretty use for these loyal gentlemen to apply the public money to. Let them all prepare their accounts, I say, and that will furnish amusement for them in these dull times of the Gag. The people do not know one half of the motives of these men for supporting Corruption. But, a little time will bring the whole to light; and then we shall see the stuff that their *loyalty* is made of. It is very hard that they should be riding about in their carriages, while those who have paid the taxes that have enriched them are starving. These impudent men always speak of the mass of the people as if they were speaking of so many brutes. They have no idea of a day of reckoning. That vile wretch of the TIMES spoke of poor CASHMAN as if he had been a dog. If the poor fellow had had his two hundred pounds instead of Walter's father having received seven hundred for libelling two of the Royal family, he would now have been alive, in all probability, and doing well. *Time: time; give us only a little time; and justice will be done to every body.*

Entered at Stationers' Hall.

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